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Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The common agricultural policy (CAP) is the first and most extensive of the Community's integrated policies, consuming almost half of the budget.

Farming is inherently linked to the economy as a whole and closely connected with spatial planning, the environment and public health. The CAP is not restricted to market policy, but includes a broad rural development policy designed to meet the needs and aspirations of society at large.

It is therefore subject to constantly changing circumstances and has to be continually adapted in response. The purpose of such adaptations is to meet the new developments challenging European agriculture from both within and without, now and in the future.

The CAP is highly complex, not least because it has to take account of the wide variety of different production systems and conditions in the different regions of the Union and to juggle the multiple objectives laid down in Article 33 of the Treaty.

The success of the policy therefore depends to a great extent on how it is explained to all the parties concerned. Information measures must therefore be properly integrated into the policy as management tools.

Furthermore, the CAP is often misunderstood because of a lack of information. The only way to rectify this situation is through a consistent, objective, and comprehensive information and communication strategy properly pitched for the general public.

To achieve this, the Commission must be in a position to involve all its partners. The main audience of such a communication strategy will be those involved in farming and life in rural areas, as well as opinion multipliers which, being closer to the citizen, are able to circulate information more widely than could the Commission. The professional farmers' organisations and other associations active in rural areas are the Commission's natural partners in this respect. These organisations will therefore be invited to present annual work programmes for part-financing by the Community.

Other organisations, like public bodies, consumers' associations, environmental protection associations, universities and media establishments can also engage in activities that contribute to the above objectives, and it must be possible to grant them part-financing also.

Lastly, the Commission must be able to launch its own information measures.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1258/1999 of 17 May 1999 on the financing of the common agricultural policy stipulates that measures intended to provide information on the CAP are to be financed by the EAGGF Guarantee Section. In addition, it is necessary to adopt a basic instrument, in accordance with Article 22(1) of the Financial Regulation and the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 October 1998.

Proposal for a

COUNCIL REGULATION

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 37 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,¹

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,²

Whereas:

- (1) Articles 32 to 38 of the Treaty provide for the implementation of a common agricultural policy.
- (2) Council Regulation (EC) No 1258/1999 of 17 May 1999 on the financing of the common agricultural policy³ stipulates that measures intended to provide information on the common agricultural policy are to be financed by the EAGGF Guarantee Section.
- (3) Article 22(1) of the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977 applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁴ stipulates that the implementation of appropriations entered for significant Community action requires a basic act. Under the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 October 1998 on legal bases and implementation of the budget, a basic act is also needed for the measures covered by this Regulation.
- (4) The issues surrounding the common agricultural policy and its development should be explained to both farmers and other parties directly concerned, as well as the general public.
- (5) The priority measures which the Community may support should be defined.
- (6) Organisations representing those active in farming and in rural areas, particularly farmers' organisations, consumers' associations and environmental protection associations play a vital role in informing their members about the common

¹ OJ

² OJ

³ OJ L 160, 26.6.1999, p. 103.

⁴ OJ L 356, 31.12.1977, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, ECSC, Euratom) No 2779/98 (OJ L 347, 23.12.1998, p. 3).

agricultural policy and relaying to the Commission the opinions of the parties concerned in general and farmers in particular.

- (7) Since the common agricultural policy is the first and most extensive of the Community's integrated policies, it should be explained to the general public. Other parties likely to be able to present information projects that will help achieve this goal should therefore be eligible to make proposals.
- (8) The Commission must have the necessary resources to implement the information actions it wishes to realise in the area of agriculture.
- (9) Although activities that can be assisted under other Community programmes should not be financed under this Regulation, the complementarity of such activities with other Community initiatives should nevertheless be encouraged.
- (10) Since the measures required for the implementation of this Regulation are management measures within the meaning of Article 2 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁵, they should be adopted by use of the management procedure provided for in Article 4 of that Decision.

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

The Community may finance information measures relating to the common agricultural policy that aim, in particular, at:

- (a) helping to explain, implement and develop this policy,
- (b) promoting the European model of agriculture and helping people understand it,
- (c) informing farmers and other parties active in rural areas,
- (d) raising public awareness of the issues and objectives of the CAP.

These actions aim to supply coherent, objective and comprehensive information in order to give an overall picture of this policy.

Article 2

1. The measures referred to in Article 1 may be:

- (a) annual work programmes presented, in particular, by farmers' or rural development organisations, consumers' associations and environmental protection associations,

⁵ OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.

- (b) specific measures presented by any party other than those referred to in (a), in particular the public authorities of the Member States, the media and universities,
 - (c) activities implemented at the Commission's initiative, in particular measures of mutual benefit to the Commission and the target groups of the measures referred to in Article 1.
- 2. The maximum financing rate for the measures referred to in paragraph 1(a) and (b) shall be 75% of eligible costs.
- 3. The following measures may not receive Community financing as provided for in Article 1:
 - (a) measures which are required by law,
 - (b) measures already receiving financing under another Community operation.
- 4. In order to implement measures as referred to in paragraph 1(c), the Commission may have recourse to any technical and administrative assistance it might need.

Article 3

- 1. Measures eligible under Article 2 shall include, in particular, talks, seminars, publications, media actions and productions, participation in international events and programmes for the exchange of experiences.
- 2. Measures as referred to in Article 2 shall be selected on the basis of general criteria such as:
 - (a) the quality of the project,
 - (b) cost effectiveness.

Article 4

Community financing shall not exceed the annual appropriations decided by the budgetary authority.

Article 5

The Commission shall ensure that the Community measures and projects implemented under this Regulation are consistent with and complement other Community action.

Article 6

The Commission shall monitor and check the activities financed by the Community to ensure that they are properly and efficiently implemented. The Commission's representatives shall be authorised to make on-the-spot checks on such activities, including by sampling.

Article 7

The Commission, where it judges it to be appropriate, evaluate the measures financed under this Regulation.

Article 8

The Commission shall present a report on the implementation of this Regulation to the European Parliament and the Council every two years. The first report must be presented not later than 31 December 2001.

Article 9

1. For the purpose of implementing this Regulation, the Commission shall be assisted in accordance with the procedure provided for in paragraph 2 by the Committee for the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund set up by Regulation (EEC) No 729/70⁶.
2. Where this paragraph is referred to, the management procedure laid down in Article 4 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply.

The period provided for in Article 4(3) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be one month.

Article 10

This Regulation shall enter into force on the seventh day following its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2000.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

⁶ OJ L 94, 28.4.1970, p. 13.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF OPERATION

Council Regulation on information measures relating to the common agricultural policy.

2. BUDGET HEADING(S) INVOLVED

B1-382 – Enhancing public awareness of the common agricultural policy.

3. LEGAL BASIS

Article 37 of the Treaty.

4. DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

4.1 General objective

To inform farmers, people living in rural areas and, in certain cases, the general public about the issues and objectives of the common agricultural policy in order to facilitate its implementation, help people understand it and promote the European model of agriculture.

4.2 Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

Unlimited duration.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1 Compulsory expenditure

5.2 Non-differentiated appropriations

5.3 Type of revenue involved: no revenue.

6. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE

- Subsidy for joint financing with other sources in the public and/or private sector.
- Financing of measures at the Commission's initiative.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Method of calculating total cost of operation (definition of unit costs)

Annual work programmes: five programmes at EUR 300 000 and 10 programmes at EUR 150 000.

Specific measures: around 20 measures with an average cost of EUR 25 000.

Measures at the Commission's initiative:

- production of communication tools (printed, audiovisual and electronic publications): EUR 600 000,
- organisation of or participation in events: EUR 200 000,
- dissemination policy: EUR 200 000.

7.2 Itemised breakdown of cost

Commitment appropriations in EUR million (current prices)

Breakdown	Budget year 2000	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5 and subs. yrs.	Total
Part-financing of annual work programmes	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	18.000
Part-financing of specific measures	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	3.000
Financing of measures at the Commission's initiative	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	6.000
Total	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	27.000

The breakdown between budget items inside the heading is indicative and can be adapted as needed provided the annual appropriations decided by the budgetary authority are not exceeded.

7.3 Schedule of commitment appropriations/payment appropriations

EUR million

	Budget year 2000	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5 and subs. Yrs.	Total
Commitment appropriations	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	27.000
Payment appropriations	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500	27.000

8. FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES

The financial agreements concluded under this commitment decision allow for the possibility of on-the-spot checks by the Commission and the Court of Auditors. The recipients are obliged to submit financial reports and accounts, which will be analysed both from the point of view of content and in terms of the eligibility of expenditure, in accordance with the objective of Community financing. Verification of supporting documents may be exhaustive or based on sampling and extrapolation of the findings. Wrongly paid amounts will be the subject of a recovery order.

9. ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1 Specific and quantified objectives; target population

- Specific objectives: the measures to be financed will target information multipliers in order to maximise the impact of the available resources.
- Target population: organisations representing those active in farming and in rural areas at European, national and regional level, consumers' associations and environmental protection associations, national and local authorities, the press, the audiovisual media and academic circles.

9.2 Grounds for the operation

- Need for Community financial aid, having particular regard to the principle of subsidiarity: the common agricultural policy (CAP) is one of the Community's most extensive integrated policies, consuming almost half of the budget. It is also highly complex and subject to constantly changing circumstances which call for continual adaptation. This state of affairs justifies an information policy at both national and European level, implemented by the Commission as well as the organisations representing the different parties directly concerned. Such operations will complement those implemented by the Member States and will provide not only technical explanations but also a clear, consistent overall view, while encouraging exchange of experience, networking and a better understanding among the general public of the issues facing the CAP.
- Choice of ways and means:

- (a) advantages over possible alternatives (comparative advantages): part-financing of measures proposed by third parties can mobilise more financial and human resources. Such measures, along with those implemented directly by the Commission, will meet the requirements laid down by the Treaty of Amsterdam relating to transparency and the citizen's right to information.
 - (b) explanatory reference to similar Community or national operations: information measures implemented by organisations and by the Commission complement those implemented by the public authorities in the Member States. There are no other Community information measures relating to the CAP.
 - (c) spin-off and multiplier effects expected: the measures to be financed should lead to better application of the policy, the exchange of experience and a deeper understanding of the CAP among the general public.
- Main factors of uncertainty which could affect the specific results of the operation: none.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the operation

Details and frequency of planned evaluations: the Commission will present a report on the implementation of this Regulation to the European Parliament and the Council every two years.